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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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Senate
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SENATE
P. S. Res. No. 1376

PREPARED BY: _____

Introduced by **SENATOR LOREN LEGARDA**

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT MUST EXTEND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES INVOLUNTARILY DISPLACED BY THREATS TO LIFE AND SECURITY AND URGE STRENGTHENED COOPERATION IN THE ASEAN REGION TO ADDRESS THE RELATED ISSUES OF FORCED MIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 2 of the 1987 Constitution states that "the Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy, adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land."

WHEREAS, the Philippines, as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol and to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, is obliged to recognize that refugees have a lawful right to enter a country for the purposes of seeking asylum regardless of how they arrive, subject to procedures it may adopt;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has a long history of extending humanitarian assistance and refuge to asylum seekers. In 1939, the country accepted 1,300 Jews who were trying to escape persecution from Nazi Germany in Europe. This was followed by the exodus of Vietnamese people during the 1970s when it hosted around 400,000 refugees in settlement camps, some of whom were relocated to other countries, or returned to their country when the conditions improved, or allowed to stay in the Philippines thereafter becoming productive members of their adopted communities;

WHEREAS, in 2012, a year after it ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the Philippines became the first country in the Asia Pacific to set up a process to protect refugees and stateless persons and provide them shelter and humanitarian assistance, acknowledging that they have sought shelter outside their

home country not for economic advantage, but in search of safety in the face of persecution;

WHEREAS, the Rohingya Muslims, mostly from the Rakhine State in Myanmar, have been known to be increasingly threatened by systematic violence, deprived of basic rights such as shelter, education, employment, and denied of citizenship and recognition in their home country;

WHEREAS, groups of Rohingya Muslims in the thousands have fled Myanmar by boat to seek refuge elsewhere in the region, but expectedly being exposed to harsh conditions in the open seas such as lack of food and water, and often victimized by human trafficking and smuggling syndicates at voyage;

WHEREAS, countries that may refuse to give shelter to Rohingyas who are fleeing Myanmar could be unknowingly enabling a climate of continued violence against them;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government through the Department of Justice has announced that it is prepared to extend humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya migrants who arrive on Philippine shores, consistent with its obligations and duties under international law;

WHEREAS, cooperation among member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) must be strengthened in addressing the complex issue of forced migration, as inextricably linked to human trafficking, especially of vulnerable populations such as the Rohingya Muslims;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to express the sense of the Senate that the Philippine government must extend humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees involuntarily displaced by threats to life and security and urge strengthened cooperation in the ASEAN region to address the related issues of forced migration and human trafficking.

Adopted,



LOREN LEGARDA

Senator